



May 28, 2002

# **SAFETY NEWS AND VIEWS**

*Eastern Administrative Support Center*

## **June is National Safety Month**

The entire month of June will be dedicated to safety, not only in the workplace, but in your vehicle and at home. Beth June, the Regional Safety Manager, will be showing several videos throughout the month at different times. The workplace safety videos will be "Office Safety, It's a Jungle in There"; "Working Smart, General Office Safety"; "Office Ergonomics"; "Heat Stress" and "First Aid on the Job". For those of you who work outside or recreate outside, the Heat Stress video is of particular interest. Flyers and handouts, courtesy of AAA of Tidewater, on child car seats, driver improvement and motor vehicle safety will be available. All of you are encouraged to attend. The place and times will be sent via e-mail to EASC employees. The videos are available for loan to all clients. Simply send the Regional Safety Manager an e-mail with this request including your name, job title, address and phone number. You will also find more videos listed under training on our web site.

## **Good Housekeeping Reduces Accidents, Hazards**

Slips, trips, and falls are responsible for 15% of all accidental deaths and many injuries, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) They recommend:

- ✓ Passageways, storerooms, and service rooms be kept clean and orderly.
- ✓ Keep floors clean and dry.
- ✓ Provide drains, grates, mats, and elevated work surfaces where needed.
- ✓ Keep floors, workplaces, and passageways free of protruding nails, carpeting, holes, and loose materials.
- ✓ Keep aisles clear, clearly marked, and wide enough to accommodate materials handling equipment.
- ✓ Keep covers and guards in place over pits, tanks, holes, etc.

## **Choosing the Right Gloves**

Hand and finger injuries nearly top the list of most frequently disabling injuries (second only to the back). Selecting the right glove can greatly improve job performance as well as provide good protection from the hazard. Some good guidelines to follow include:

- ✓ Assess the workplace for hazards to the hands.
- ✓ Select and use proper gloves based upon the workplace hazard assessment.
- ✓ Document the hazard assessment.
- ✓ Communicate the selection of gloves to the workers along with a discussion of the hazards.
- ✓ Provide good training that the workers understand in the use and limitations of the gloves provided.
- ✓ Do not use defective gloves or equipment.
- ✓ Beware of employee-owned protection. The employer must ensure it is matched to the hazard and to the employee using the protection.

## Watch Your Back and Wrists

Back injuries continue to put employees out of work. In the year 2000, 411,000 back injuries occurred (that's more than 1,000 a day (1,126)). It's no surprise that overexertion in lifting accounted for 256,000 lost-time injuries. A typical back injury results in six days away from work.

The most non-productive injuries involve carpal tunnel syndrome of the wrists. These cases average 27 days away from work. Forty-five percent of carpal tunnel cases keep workers off the job for more than a month (31 days or more).

The price paid for lost-time cases is a major reason that many injured workers are being brought back for restricted duty. Restricted duty cases jumped nearly 70 percent in the 1990s, leveling off at about one million for the last three years.

## Safer and Healthier Homes

### National Safety Council Offers Top 5 Checklist

Recognizing risk areas in America's homes and taking steps to reduce injuries and death is the focus of Home Safety Week. According to the National Safety Council there are 26,500 deaths and 7.3 million disabling injuries in homes each year costing Americans \$95.7 billion.

"Parents and families can take simple steps to make their homes safer, healthier and happier," said Jerry Scannell, president of the National Safety Council. "Many home injuries and fatalities can be prevented if we knew what to do and we changed our behavior and environment." The leading causes of fatal injuries in the home include falls, solid and liquid poisonings, fires and burns, and suffocation. The National Safety Council recommends the following to reduce the risk of death and injury.

1. Look for hidden hazards. Before taking action to make a home safer, identify possible hazards. Hazards vary by the features a home has and the ages of people living there. For example, consider the layout of the home and the extra amenities such as whirlpool tubs or fireplaces. Also, the age and health of the people who live in the home dictate safety needs.

2. Prepare for fire emergencies. Install smoke detectors on each floor of a home and in sleeping areas. Check the batteries at least once a month and change them once a year on a special anniversary such as changing clocks for daylight savings time. Design an emergency fire escape plan and practice it with family members.
3. Install carbon monoxide (CO) detectors and test for indoor air quality. Place CO detectors near sleeping areas and check heating systems, stoves and fire places for efficiency each year to reduce the risk of CO poisonings.
4. Prevent childhood poisonings. Store household cleaners, drugs and other chemicals in a locked box or cabinet. Never leave children unattended in the bathroom, kitchen, garage or other area where poisonous materials exist.
5. Avoid falls with simple "steps." Secure all carpet with double-backed tape and install slip-resistant finishes in bathtubs. Install handrails on stairways and bathtubs and make sure they are securely attached to the walls. Use appropriate ladders and step-stools to get out-of-reach items.

The EASC Safety Office wants to hear from you! If you have a safety suggestion or comment, please contact EASC Safety at (757) 441-6297 or [Beth.D.June@noaa.gov](mailto:Beth.D.June@noaa.gov) or the EASC website at [www.easc.noaa.gov](http://www.easc.noaa.gov)

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